

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions of claims in the application.

1-45. (Cancelled)

46. (Previously Presented) A recombinant vector that is selected from a group consisting of pFG100 deposited under the accession No. DSM 12091, and pFG200 deposited under the accession No. DSM 12108.

47-52. (Cancelled)

53. (Previously Presented) A lactic acid bacterium that is *Lactococcus lactis* subsp. *lactis* strain FA4-1-1 containing pFG100, deposited under the accession No. DSM 12091 or *Lactococcus lactis* subsp. *lactis* strain CHCC4146 containing pFG200, deposited under the accession No. DSM 12108.

54. (Cancelled)

55. (Currently Amended) A method for stably maintaining a recombinant vector in lactic acid bacterial host cells, growing in a particular environment, which method comprises:

(A) providing mutant cells that are ~~auxotrophic~~ auxotrophic lactic acid bacterial cells, which cannot grow in said environment and which carry a nonsense mutation in a *pyr* gene; and

(B) producing said host cells by transforming said nonsense mutant cells with a vector that lacks a gene coding for antibiotic resistance and that comprises (i) lactic acid bacterial DNA, (ii) a gene coding for an amber suppressor that is a tRNA comprising the CUA anticodon, and (iii) a replicon that makes said vector capable of replicating in a lactic acid bacterium, such that said host cells do not grow if they lose said vector.

56-70. (Cancelled)

71. (New) A recombinant vector comprising:

(A) lactic acid bacterial DNA;

(B) a first gene coding for an amber suppressor that is a tRNA comprising the CUA anticodon;

(C) a replicon making said vector capable of replicating in a lactic acid bacterium;

(D) a second gene coding for a desired gene product,

wherein (a) said vector lacks a gene coding for antibiotic resistance, (b) said gene product is a bacteriophage lysine, and (c) said second gene is obtained from the bacteriophage ØvML3 as contained in DN209/pFG7 deposited under the accession No. DSM 12089.